

SENATE BILL 1951

By Crowe

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
Chapter 7, relative to tuition discounts for first  
responders.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by  
adding the following as a new section:

(a)

(1) As used in this section:

(A) "Emergency medical service technician" means an individual  
who possesses a valid certificate issued pursuant to title 68, chapter 140;

(B) "Firefighter" means any person in the employ of a unit of  
government who is a member of the fire department of such unit, is  
trained in firefighting or prevention of fires, and is actively engaged in  
such work, and whose primary livelihood is derived from such work.  
"Firefighter" includes a bona fide member of a volunteer fire department;  
and

(C) "Law enforcement officer" means any police officer of a  
Tennessee municipality; any commissioned member of the department of  
safety, the Tennessee wildlife resources agency, the Tennessee highway  
patrol, or the Tennessee bureau of investigation; Tennessee county  
constables; any Tennessee county sheriff or deputy sheriff actually  
engaged in law enforcement; and any correctional officer employed by  
the department of correction or the department of children's services.

(2) A law enforcement officer, firefighter, or emergency medical service technician shall be eligible to receive a twenty-five percent (25%) reduction in the undergraduate tuition at any state-operated institution of higher learning if the person applying for the discount:

(A) Is actively employed as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or emergency medical service technician; and

(B) Has first earned an associate degree using one (1) of the following grant or scholarship programs:

(i) The Tennessee Promise scholarship program established under § 49-4-708;

(ii) The Community College Reconnect Grant program established under § 49-4-927; or

(iii) The Tennessee reconnect grant program established under § 49-4-944.

(3) The tuition discount provided by this section shall only be available to a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or emergency medical service technician who satisfies the requirements of subdivision (a)(2), and shall only be applied toward tuition charged by a state-operated institution of higher learning for the courses or credit hours necessary for that person to receive a baccalaureate degree.

(b) The Tennessee higher education commission is directed, authorized, and empowered to promulgate and adopt rules necessary to implement this section, including rules for the allocation of appropriations specifically appropriated for the implementation of this section.

(c) Any reimbursements to a state-operated institution of higher learning for the tuition discounts provided by this section shall be limited to those funds specifically

appropriated for that purpose in the general appropriations act. Reimbursement shall be limited to providing for the discount on tuition provided for in this section.

SECTION 2. For the purpose of promulgating rules, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect July 1, 2019, the public welfare requiring it, and shall apply to tuition discounts for the 2019-2020 academic year and each academic year thereafter.